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development of the French language in the sixteenth century.

But the little volume begins farther back than that, with a sketch of the development of the Tuscan tongue at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and points out that the emancipation of the Italian vulgar preceded by two or three generations that of the French vulgar. M. Villey gives interesting sketches of the men who wrought this work, and citations from their writings:—Leone Battista Alberti among the earliest. A hundred years later when the most original works were already clothed in Italian, the discussion regarding the superiority of Latin still continued, and Cardinal Bembo, who was counted among the pure Ciceronians, astonished the world of letters by openly taking sides with the “party of the barbarians,” and became the principal defender of the Tuscan tongue.

Alberti had only claimed the right of the Italian language to existence. Bembo asserted that for certain subjects it should always be employed, and declared that the ancient languages no longer sufficed for modern needs.

Many minor questions arose in the debates on the principal points, and M. Villey describes the grammatical and orthographical labors that now were entered upon, while the fighting between Latin and Italian still continued. These later battles—skirmishes of varying fortune—were unimportant as regarded the cause in Italy; Bembo had secured its victory; but as regarded France, they were of moment. Their contemporary character not only attracted the attention of those Frenchmen who were rising to defend their own language, but they did not hesitate to borrow from their Italian brothers armor and weapons for the fight.

The most conspicuous of these Frenchmen was Joachim Du Bellay: henceforth indissolubly associated with him—thanks to M. Villey—is the Italian Sperone Speroni, a celebrity in his own day, whose dying fame is now suddenly revived. He was twenty-four years older than Du Bellay; and in 1542 there were published ten Dialogues by him. They had a great and immediate success; the Aldus press issued five new editions in the next four years. One of these Dialogues was “*Della Lengua*”; and of this Dialogue the

“*Deffense et Illustration*” is in great measure a translation. The ample and entirely convincing proofs of this are to be found in M. Villey’s volume. He gives twenty pages of parallel passages and then prints in full Speroni’s Dialogues.

He deals justly with Du Bellay and somewhat lightens the blow to his reputation dealt by the facts here set forth, by remarking that these borrowings should not be judged from our modern point of view. In M. Villey’s words: “Du Bellay would have thought himself blameworthy had he borrowed phrases and whole chapters from a French author; but to despoil a foreign author, writing in a different language from ours, was to play the part of a good Frenchman—was to labor for the enrichment of our language.”

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MODERN FRENCH LITERATURE.

MICHEL SALOMON: *Charles Nodier et le groupe romantique, d'après des documents inédits.* Paris: Perrin et Cie., 1908.

Great interest attaches to the publication of M. Salomon’s *Nodier*, relieving, as it does, one of the most interesting figures in the French Romantic School. One is rather surprised that the task should have been left undone so long. No work of importance on Nodier has been published since 1867, the date of his daughter’s *Souvenirs*; yet none of the minor Romanticists are more sympathetic, or more important in literary history.

This book is very carefully ‘documenté,’ and written in a style not without humour. A little over one-third of the volume is taken up with the life of Nodier. Much unpublished detail is here brought to light: the author has ransacked municipal records and old letter-files, verifying his dates and incidents with an almost philological patience. Less vivid than Mme. Menessier’s reminiscences, M. Salomon’s chapters give us, in recompense, a more complete portrait of the genial polygraph and bibliophile: we may follow him, a second La Fontaine, in his youthful wanderings in the Jura, read snatches of his

father's monitory letters, catch glimpses of his life at Sir Herbert Crofts', or at Laybach, or at Paris, presiding over the hospitable salon of the Arsenal. The last third of this biography seems rather slighted; twenty years are passed over in some ten pages. We regret, too, the charm of Mme. Menessier's more personal style, yet perhaps no more than M. Salomon himself, who frequently takes over her narrative almost word for word.

The second part of the volume treats of the Arsenal group, sketching in the host and raconteur that we have come to know in Dumas' *Mémoires*, then taking up consecutively some forty of those who at one time or another figured among the guests. Many forgotten glories, conservatives as well as Romanticists, pass before us in more or less vivid processional: they enter, pay their tribute of poem or compliment to Marie, have their discussion or their bon-mot with their host, and take their leave. Of their literary relations to Nodier, of their contributions to the feast of reason and the flow of soul,—as well as of Nodier's influence upon their productions—we find out, unfortunately, little or nothing. These are details one rarely finds in 'documents.'

The last third of the book takes up the works of Nodier. In such a volume, of course, only a sketch is possible: Nodier's publications fill a hundred columns in the *Manuel* of Vicaire. The sketch is in the main well done; yet those who do not possess Vicaire would have appreciated a condensation of his extended bibliography, printed in small type at the end of the volume. Aside from the usefulness of such a list, it would give, better than any possible statement, an idea of the manifold intellectual interests of this 'Juif errant de la littérature.' In the discussion of Nodier's fiction, which remains his principal title to remembrance, we might reasonably expect a somewhat more extended treatment, correlating it with the literature of its time; we find, for instance, no mention of *Lord Ruthven*, the original of the melodrama *Les Vampires*, the probable inspiration of Hugo's *Han d'Islande*, and the avatar of that sanguinary *école féroce* to which we owe *Clara Gazul*, *El Verdugo*, and *L'Âne mort*.

But it is easy to find fault, and M. Salomon has given us, on the whole, an admirable piece of

work. It is now left for some one to take up the question of Nodier's literary influence, not so much from 'documents' as from the works themselves.

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HISTORICAL GERMAN GRAMMAR.

Historical German Grammar. Vol. I. Phonology, Word-Formation, and Accidence. By JOSEPH WRIGHT, Ph. D., D. C. L., LL. D., Litt. D., Fellow of the British Academy, Professor of Comparative Philology in the University of Oxford. Oxford University Press, 1907. Pp. xvi + 314.

The distinguished editor of the *English Dialect Dictionary* believes that the comparatively small number of people who take a real interest in the scientific study of language is due chiefly to the lack of suitable handbooks written in English. To meet this want he has begun to edit *The Students' Series of Historical and Comparative Grammars*, of which the present is the initial volume. This volume has already been followed by an *Old English Grammar* by the editor and Elizabeth Mary Wright. A volume on historical German syntax is to be contributed by Dr. Fiedler.

Probably most persons interested in historical German grammar have a sufficient command of modern German to use works written in German; but Professor Wright has certainly succeeded in selecting the best results of German scholarship and in making an attractive and effective presentation of them for English-speaking students. There is, indeed, no equally useful book on the subject of similar size written in German, and German students with a sufficient command of English might use it to advantage. For its size, it contains an astonishing amount of accurate and useful information. The following remarks are not intended to detract materially from this praise.

In chapters IV–VI the author treats successively the OHG. Development of the General Germanic Vowel-System, the MHG. Development of the OHG. Vowel-System, and the NHG. Develop-